

Shelton State Courier presents

Maxwell's Crossing

A Literary and Fine Arts Publication

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Shelton State Community College

Winter 2000-2001

Caterpillars Are Not the Prettiest Animals of the Forest

By Susan Passmore

Caterpillars are not the prettiest animals of the forest and tend to get picked on quite a lot because they are so different. On a bright sunny spring day the birds and animals of the forest were picking on this one particular caterpillar. He moved very slowly and never moved off of the bush. This was because the leaves were large and juicy and caterpillars love to eat and munch on juicy leaves. Plus it was a very long way down to the floor of the forest and it would take him an awful long time to crawl all the way back up to the bush.

On this particular day the birds were being meaner than ever, chirping about saying the caterpillar was too fat and ate entirely too much. The squirrels were also being rather cruel by running all over the place, shaking the branches of the bush the caterpillar was on and laughing at how scared the caterpillar looked. Everyone else just remarked how funny he looked inching along, munching on the leaves, with his tiny feet scurrying as fast as they could but never really going anywhere.

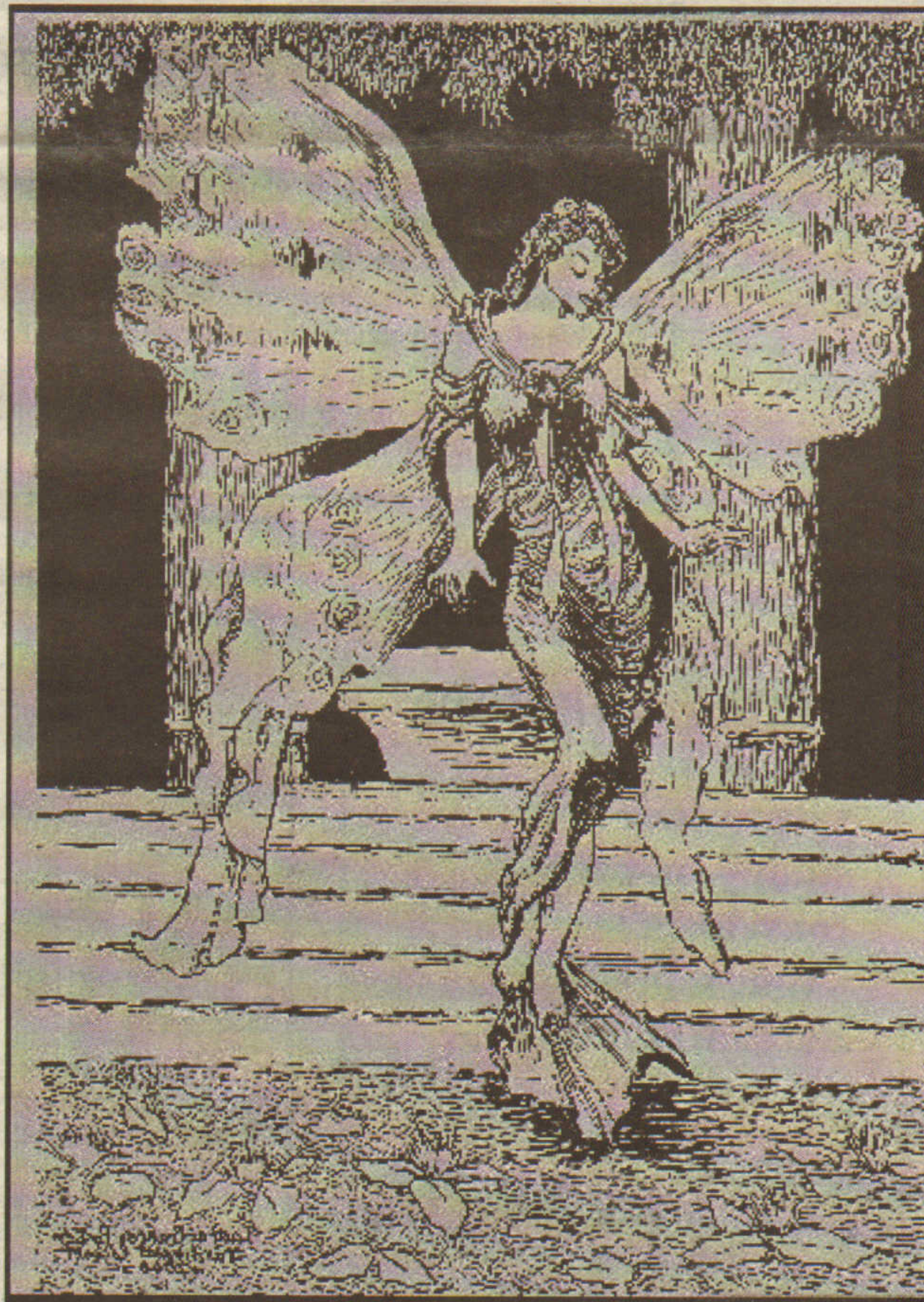
It just so happened that one of the fairies of the forest heard and saw what the creatures of the forest were doing to this poor caterpillar and was very upset. Now, one thing you must never do is upset a fairy for they have great powers for such little things and

can do lots of magic. All of the animals scattered away when they saw the fairy because they were all scared of its magic. The fairy flew up next to the caterpillar who was so slow he could not run away and whispered in his ear. He told the caterpillar to go to the end of the leaf, lie very still, and take a nap. Being a good caterpillar and not wanting to upset the pretty fairy he did what he was told.

Not a second after the caterpillar had fallen asleep did the fairy begin to swirl around him and cover

him with this fabric and fly away. The animals were in shock. They thought the fairy had put a spell on the poor caterpillar. Weeks went by and the caterpillar still lay in the cocoon the fairy had made around him. Surely he will be all right and come out soon thought all of the animals. And the caterpillar did come out of the cocoon but not as the caterpillar but as something beautiful and with wings.

The fairy had cast a spell on the caterpillar. He had changed him



Pen & Ink drawing by Laura Colbert

The editor says, hello...

It was my privilege to work on this display of fine talent and creation that your peers and fellow students have graciously allowed us to use.

There are several wonderful poems, creative and unique essays, and an inspiring look into the past from the Native American culture.

I would like to thank all of the entrants of the contest. My deepest gratitude to the staff of the Courier for their patience and knowledge and of course my assistants James McGregor and Nathan Boettcher.

into a butterfly. The caterpillar was no longer ugly and slow but beautiful and had wings of brilliant colors like the rainbow. The animals looked in awe as the butterfly stretched out his new wings and displayed the beautiful colors and designs on them. With one flit of his wings the butterfly flew away into the bright sky. Because the caterpillar had been a good and kind creature who had been teased and tortured by others, the fairy took pity on him and gave him beauty and grace.

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Daddy?

By Debra Smith

A beautiful baby girl was born today,
She entered this world in a special way.
She looked to see who all were there,
She looked to see who all cared.

There was mama, nana, and papa too,
But someone was missing and she wondered who?
All her friends were gathered around,
But yet someone just could not be found.

She had never seen this person before,
How would she recognize him if he walked through the door?
She often had heard this person's name,
Was it her daddy, were they the same?

The baby grew bigger as days went by
But this person's voice never even said hi.
She thought to herself he must not care

For I've not seen him anywhere.

Did I do something that was oh so wrong
That he can't even pick up the phone?
I see the hurt in my mommy's eyes
Is he the reason she sometimes cries?

Maybe this is the way life is suppose to be,
Maybe he's not supposed to care for me.
When I'm older and other kids are around
I'll ask them how their daddy was found.

Well, I guess it's just mommy and me,
For now that's the way it's suppose to be.
But one-day mommy will find someone new,
He'll love and care for us too.

And one day if that other person comes around
I'll tell him his daughter cannot be found.
I'll tell him we've found someone new,
Someone who's a daddy.



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Future Issues

This premier issue of *Maxwell's Crossing* is presented as a supplement to the regular news-format editions of the *Courier*. The publication was originally scheduled for Dec. 13, but technical and marketing exigencies suggested it would better serve to be printed over the holidays and be presented in the *Courier* boxes for reading as soon as the spring semester began.

We offer this publication on an experimental basis. If you like it, let us know. If you want to write or produce art work for a future issue, let us know that, too.

If *Maxwell's Crossing* is well received, we will print creative issues of the *Courier* after the fall and spring semesters.

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Maxwell's Crossing

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The *Shelton State Courier* is a "campus newspaper" written and produced with the help of students.

Among other functions, it is intended as a vehicle for student expression and all students are urged to participate with submis-

sions of written and artistic material.

The college seeks to fulfill the statement for academic freedom in working with the students in the production of this paper:

"The college seeks to provide an atmosphere conducive to open and honest intellectual inquiry in any college forum which is appropriate for dialogue and student participation. The students should feel free to exercise the right to dissent within limits of decorum and good taste."

All publications are subject to review by the Publications Action Group, which has been delegated the responsibility to review all college publications for content and accuracy.

Death of a Strong Man

By Amber L. Mitchell

I see you sitting there all alone
I wonder what you are thinking
And suddenly I feel all alone
Your mind is tired
So weak but strong
Your body is alive
But oh so gone
You have life left in you
But you don't know how to live
It just scares me to see you like this.

Pictures

By Harrison Vaughn

I knew the day would come, just not this soon. My father, degenerate as he may have been, was still my father. Out of work for the past few years he slowly worked his way back onto my mother's bad side. Now he was gone. I feel no pain, or guilt, or remorse as I pack his things in the dilapidated trailer. The binge drinking had finally done him in. The doctors said that his liver was not overly damaged. But we all knew that that was where the cancer had started. Cause of death was ruled as cancer of the bone. Death was inevitable, it was just when was the uncertainty.

The divorce had been years ago and yet he still kept pictures of their wedding day on his bedside table. He was an artist, full of life and creativity but forced to work at the factory in order to live. None of the furniture is worth saving. Most of the cushions have been eaten away by time. Pictures, so many pictures in this place. He loved everyone close to him, funny how we never knew. This sad excuse for a

houseplant is the first to go into the garbage. After years of trying dad still had not received a green thumb. There's nothing left in this place but dust, memories, and loss. Maybe everything should just go to the dump, except the pictures. I am going to keep the pictures if not for keepsake cliché memorabilia than for the simple fact that I know he would want me to. Making out a will made him think of death. And there wasn't much of anything here to pass down. Everything can be trucked off to the dump or the Salvation Army tomorrow but I will save the pictures, his memories.

Opal Swan

By Chris Ivie

The Swan rides
Atop the mirror like pond.
She is a ghostly image
In the mist,
A phantom in the early morning fog.
I am watching her
From high atop the bluff.
The waves lazily slap
At the shore of the bay
Just beyond her pond.
The fog grows thicker,
a misty shroud, a death
Shroud envelopes the world.
And the swan is now faintly
Visible
Like a distant ivory palace
Floating in a gray sky.

Norma Jean Monroe

By Elise Harrison

I am everything a man wants
I am no one
A simple country girl
Cosmetically transformed into a blonde bombshell
I am the spokesperson for all air condition vents
Wearing my white dress as

a costume
Innocently flying over my corset tight waist.
Shower me in pink lame
Walk with me down the stairs boys
Show me that diamonds are my best friends.
I try to be the wife,
The household star domesticated into TV dinners.
I never really liked baseball any way.

Does anyone really care what goes on in my head?
Can I ever be more than a buxom bosom buddy?
I am what they want
Every teenage boy's pin up fantasy
The insatiable Barbie doll figurine
That makes them melt into manhood
With a smile and free kisses into the air.

I am going to leave you all
Letting the housewives chatter and assume.
My fantasy retreat over the hill calls.
The posh glamour of my world needs to want me.
The pool outside, the pink satin sofa in the bedroom
Champagne glasses that never empty
Plastic bottles of downers that make me feel up
All require my company.

How The Rhinoceros Got His Skin

A Bedtime Story—

By Kathryn Brandino

One day there was this little man who was very hungry. He started to make a cake to eat for lunch. When he took the cake out of the oven it smelled so good that a rhinoceros came to see what it was. Well the rhinoceros was very mean and demanded that the little man give him all of the cake

at once. Being a very nice person the little man offered to share the cake with the rhinoceros explaining he too was hungry. This just would not do, the rhinoceros wanted all of the delicious cake. He then chased the little man up a nearby tree and took all of the cake and made a dreadful mess of the kitchen.

After the rhinoceros had eaten all of the cake he decided that he wanted to take a bath. Just around the corner was a watering hole. And so the rhinoceros went to take a bath. He unzipped his skin and hung it on a branch and proceeded to swim around and enjoy a nice long bath.

Well, the little man was still up in the tree, and was watching everything that the rhinoceros was doing. He was mad that the rhinoceros had stolen his cake from him and wanted to teach him a lesson. As soon as the rhinoceros had gotten into the water and was a good distance from his skin the little man crawled out of the tree and gathered some things from his kitchen. The little man crept over to the rhinoceros' skin and poured a pot of honey into it with a couple of handfuls of sand and ran off to watch behind some rocks. What the little man didn't know was that some ants had crawled into the skin after he left.

The rhinoceros was soon finished with his bath and walked over to his skin. Not long after he had put it back on and zipped up his skin he began to itch. And then he really began to itch. He started to scratch his legs and then his arms and his back but this was not working. He went over to the rocks and began rubbing and scratching all over the rocks but he was still itching. He tried to take his

skin off but the honey and sand had made the zipper stuck so he couldn't take his skin off. He scratched himself all over the trees and ground and rocks, all over the desert, until finally he stopped itching. But when he looked down at his arms and his legs he noticed they had all changed. Instead of his nice smooth skin he was all wrinkly and rough. He had tugged and pulled his skin so much when he was scratching that he had stretched his skin out. This just would not do and the rhinoceros walked off pouting.

The instant the rhinoceros was out of sight the little man rolled out from behind the rocks he was hiding behind, laughing until his face turned blue. Never had he seen something so funny as that big rhinoceros rubbing himself all over the desert. Well, he thought, that will teach him from ever stealing someone else's food again.

A Sinner's Prayer

By Evelyn Lanning

Dear Lord forgive my sin.
Help me to be a Christian
once again.
Times have been so hard too
But help me to remember
Lord
That times were not so easy
for you.
Guide me now as I go along
my way.
And thank you Lord for this
night,
This night that brings my
soul
Back home to you.
And yes Lord, I will
remember
That times were not easy
for You.

My Truest Blessing

An Essay by: Michael Spencer

The sun fills each day with brightness and warmth. Though it may not always be so bright I need to squint my eyes to see or so warm I walk barefoot through the grass, it still shines. This is something each of us is blessed with every single day. The sun must also set. A period of darkness then comes until it rises once more. This period of darkness does not exist with my truest blessing. My truest blessing is my son, Owen. Owen outshines the sun on its brightest of days. He shines through the night while the sun is fast asleep. He shines on the rainiest of days and he warms my soul through the coldest of nights.

Owen has not been in my life very long. He just celebrated his first birthday. Still, I cannot imagine that I knew what joy really was before he was born. I am sure every proud father feels as though his son is the most perfect baby boy in the world. I take much selfish pride in knowing they are wrong.

Each of his blonde, cottony, soft hairs was obviously placed one by one on his bald little head with the patience and precision known only by angels. They crown his head and gently flow down and around to curl like the feathers of an angels wings. After he has had his bubble bath, I softly rub my nose and lips across the top of his head, and I now know the true meaning of clean. The soothing smell of a new rose bursting from its bud would pale in comparison to the aroma of his blonde bouquet.

His eyes are like a calm, blue uncharted sea. Its treasures untouched and re-

sources not yet discovered. In the morning, when his warm, blue, sleepy eyes engulf me, I have no doubt the tides are working. The day will come and go and God's plan is there all the while. He smiles an honest little smile as he slowly bats his long lashes while reaching out his arms for me. He lays his head on my shoulder and shows me the deepest meaning of love.

His ears are like tiny, delicate, porcelain teacups anxious to catch the first drop of whatever might fill them. The way they turn especially tuned to my voice gives me a great sense of duty to try to insure that only the sweetest of flavors might fill them. As they are filled, the joy of each new sweet sound pours through him while he coos with satisfaction.

His language assures me that words are unnecessary to communicate the important things. His thick, pouty lips utter the kindest of sounds. His sloppy wet "raspberries" are always followed with a chuckle. He speaks his own language, but no translator is needed. When he used to take a bottle, each little gulp was hitting the spot. While he enjoys his dinner he thanks his mother and I with a very faint "mmmm" as he chews. When his mother rocks him, he softly purrs to let her know she is doing it just right. The laughter that comes from the pit of his tiny potbelly tells me just how wonderful he thinks the world is.

His perfect little hands are a great communication tool also. He rubs his tiny fingers together as he motions and whispers "diss

diss". He wants to feel everything he sees as he asks what it is. Those tiny feathery fingers tickle as they caress my face. They sometimes gently pull at my lips, nose, and ears as he gazes in wonder at the face that is his daddy's. When they wrap around my finger, as small as they may be, I feel like my whole body is being wrapped by a soft blanket knitted with God's love.

The pitter patter of his little feet let me know how happy and anxious he is that I am home each evening as I walk through the door after a long day of work. No matter how bad my day might have been, he lets me know that he can make it better. His little feet follow me wherever I go. And when I sit or lie down to rest he uses them to climb all over me as if I was a great white oak.

When the sun has lain to rest and night casts its dark shadow on the earth, my son still glows. When he is laid to rest, he still shines, warming the whole house with his rays of love. I will often creep into his room at night and quietly gaze over him in complete awe, as he lay there curled with his blanket. I go to bed and thank God for my magnificent blessing, my beautiful baby boy, Owen.

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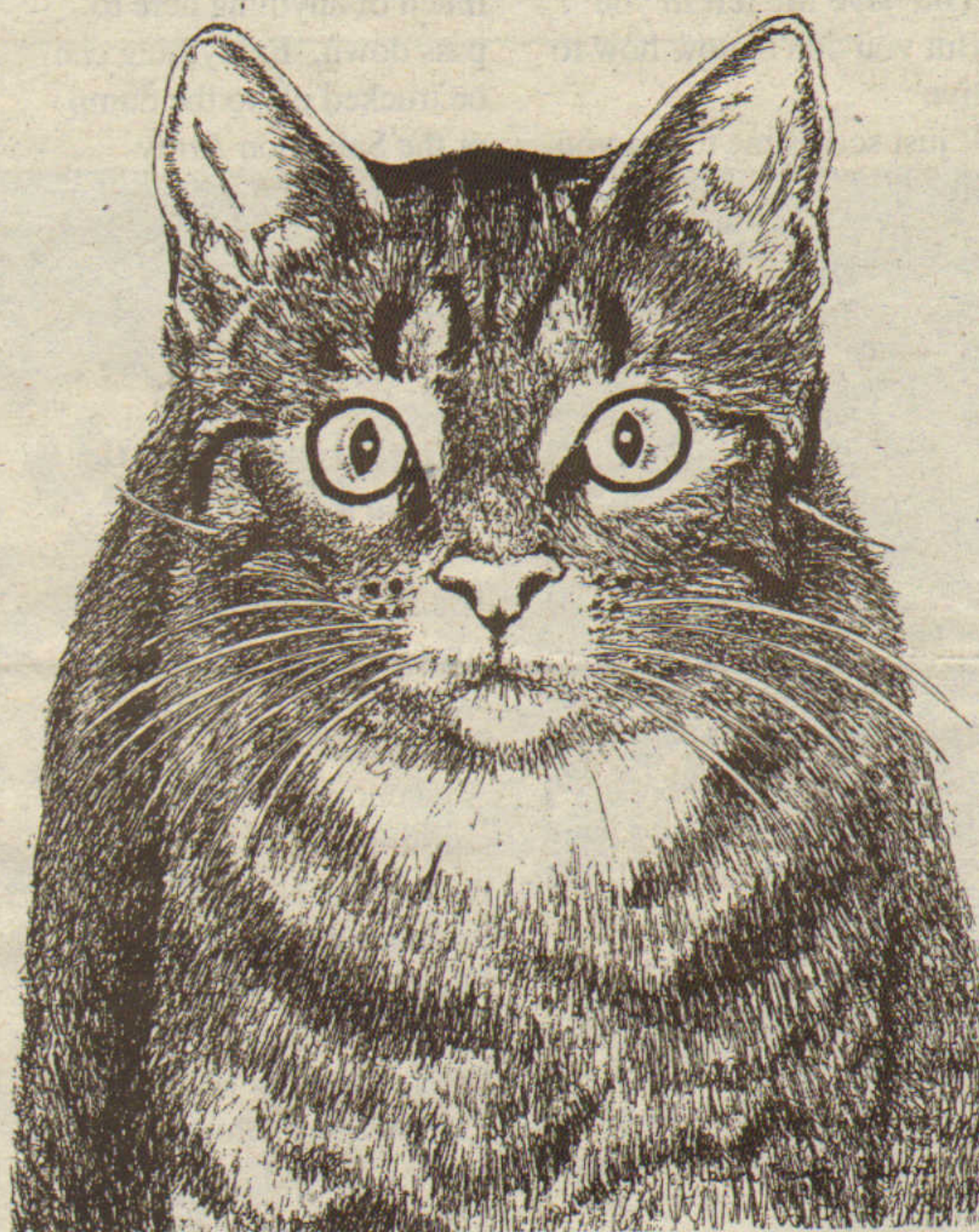
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How the Coyote Got His Cunning

Kareya was the god who in the very beginning created the world. First he made the fishes in the ocean; then he made the animals on the land; last of all he made a man. He had, however, given all the animals the same amount of rank and power.

So he went to the man he had created and said, "Make as many bows and arrows as there are animals. I am going to call all the animals together, and you are to give the longest bow and arrow to the one that should have the most power, and the shortest to the one that should have the least."

So the man set to work making bows and arrows, and at the end of nine days, he had turned out enough for all the animals created by Kareya. Then Kareya called them all together and told them the man would come to them the next day with the bows, and the one to whom he gave the longest would have the most power.

Each animal wanted to be the one to get the longest bow. Coyote schemed to outwit the others by staying awake all night. He thought that if he was the first to meet the man in the morning, he could get the longest bow for himself. So when the animals went to sleep, Coyote lay down and only pretended to go to sleep. About midnight, however, he began to feel genuinely sleepy. He got up and walked around, scratching his eyes to keep them open. As time passed, he grew sleepier. He resorted to skipping and jumping to keep awake, but the noise waked some of the other animals, so he had to stop.

About the time the morning star came up, Coyote was so sleepy, he could not keep his eyes open any longer. So he took two little sticks and sharpened them at the ends, and with these, he propped his eyelids open. Then he felt it was safe to sleep, since his eyes could

watch the morning star rising. He planned to get up before the star was completely up, for by then all the other animals would be stirring. In a few minutes, Coyote was fast asleep. The sharp sticks pierced right through his eyelids, and instead of keeping them open they pinned them shut. When the rest of the animals got up, Coyote lay in a deep sleep.

The animals went to meet the man and receive their bows. Cougar was given the longest, Bear the next longest, and so on until the next to-last bow was given to frog.

The

shortest bow was still left.

"What animal have I missed?" the man cried.

The animals began to look about, and they soon spied Coyote lying fast asleep. They all laughed heartily and danced around him. Then they led him to the man, for Coyote's eyes were still pinned together and he could not see. The man pulled the sticks out of Coyote's eyes

and gave him the shortest bow. The animals laughed so hard that the man began to pity Coyote, who would be the weakest of them all. So he prayed to Kareya about Coyote, and Kareya responded by giving Coyote more cunning than any other animal. And that is how Coyote got his cunning.



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The Gnawing of the Great Pole

There is a great pole somewhere, a mighty trunk similar to the sacred dance pole, only much, much bigger. This is the pole that holds up the world.

The Great White Grandfather Beaver of the North is gnawing at that pole. He has been gnawing at the bottom of it for ages and ages.

When the Great White Beaver of the North gets angry, he gnaws faster

and more furiously. Once he has gnawed all the way through, the pole will topple, and the earth will crash into a bottomless nothing. That will be the end of the people, of everything. The end of all ends.

So we are very careful to never make the Beaver angry. That is why Cheyenne never eat the flesh, or even touch a beaver skin. We want the world to last a little longer.

(Cheyenne)

When the Osage lived in the Sky

Way beyond the earth, a part of the Osage lived in the sky. They wanted to know where they came from, so they went to the sun. He told them that they were his children. Then they wandered still farther and came to the moon. She told them that she gave birth to them, and that the sun was their father. She said that they must leave the sky and go down to live on earth. They obeyed, but found the earth covered with water. They could not return to their home in the sky, so they

wept and called out, but no answer came from anywhere. They floated about in the air, seeking in every direction for help from some god; but they found none.

The animals were with them, and of these the elk inspired all creatures with confidence because he was the finest and most stately. The Osage appealed to the elk for help, and he dropped into the water, and began to sink. Then he called to the winds, and they came from all quarters and blew until the waters went

upward in mist.

At first only rocks were exposed, and the people traveled on the rocky places that produced no plants to eat. Then the waters began to go down until the soft earth was exposed. When this happened, the elk in his joy rolled over and over, and all his loose hairs clung to the soil. The hairs grew, and from them sprang beans, corn, potatoes, wild turnips, and then all the grasses and trees.

(Osage)

Creation of the Yakima World

In the beginning of the world, all was water, Whee-me-me-ow-ah, The Great Chief Above, lived in the sky all alone. When he decided to make the world, he went down to the shallow places in the water and began to throw up great handfuls of mud that became land.

He piled some of the mud so high that it froze hard and made the mountains. When the rain came, it turned to ice and snow on top of the high mountains. Some of the mud was hardened into rocks. Since that time the rocks have not changed—they have only become harder.

The Great Chief Above made trees grow on the earth, and also roots and berries. He made a man out of a ball of mud and told him to take fish from the waters, and deer and other game from the forests. When the man became lonely, the Great Chief Above made a woman to be his companion and taught her how to dress skins, how to find bark and roots, and how to make baskets out of them. He showed her how to cook salmon and the game that the man brought.

Once when the woman was asleep, she had a dream, and in it she wondered what more she could do to please the man. She prayed to the Great Chief Above for help. He answered her prayer by blowing his breath on her and giving her something, which she could not see or hear, smell or touch. This invisible something was preserved in a basket. Through it, the first woman taught her daughters and granddaughters the designs and skills which had been taught her.

But in spite of all the things the Great Chief Above did for them, the new people

quarreled. They bickered so much that Mother Earth was angry, and in her anger she shook the mountains so hard that those hanging over the narrow part of the Big River fell down. The rocks, falling into water, dammed the stream and also made rapids and waterfalls. Many people and animals were killed and buried under the rocks and mountains.

Someday the Great Chief Above will overturn those mountains and rocks. Then the spirits that once lived in the bones buried there will go back into them. At present those spirits live in the tops of mountains, watching their children on the earth and waiting for the great change which is to come. The voices of these spirits can be heard in the mountains at all times. Mourners who wail for their dead hear the spirit voices reply, and thus they know that their lost ones are always near.

We did not know all this by ourselves; we were told it by our fathers and grandfather, who learned it from their fathers and grandfathers. No one knows when the Great Chief Above will overturn the mountains. But we do know this: the spirits will return only to the remains of the people who in life kept the beliefs of grandfathers. Only their bones will be preserved under the mountains.

I would like to encourage all of you to continue to submit your fine works of art. Each of us has a unique spark hidden below, and it takes just a little bit of star quality to shine.



Illustrated by Laura Colbert

Why Snakes Slither and Birds Fly

By Collette Ann Acomb

When the animals first moved on the land snakes had legs. Just like lizards they could walk, run, and climb all about. But the problem with snakes was that they liked to play tricks on all of the other animals. Sometimes these tricks could be very funny, and sometimes the snake was really mean. It was on a rainy day in the jungle that the snake played his last mean trick on the bird. You see birds could not fly then like they can now. Their wings were short and did not have a lot of feathers on them. Because they were so much smaller than all of the other animals in

the jungle, they were always the victim of tricks and jokes.

The snake decided he was going to play the all time best trick on the bird. He made a plastic bright red strawberry. It just so happened that the bird loved strawberries. The snake put the fake strawberry onto the floor of the jungle, attached a string to it, and waited for the bird. Sure enough the bird came hopping by and saw the big, juicy, red strawberry. He thought to himself, "This strawberry is just sitting here. I am sure it would not mind if I ate some of it." So the bird tiptoed up to the strawberry and reached out to grab it. Just as he was reaching for

it the strawberry moved a little.

Well the bird wanted this strawberry very badly and he kept trying and trying to grab the strawberry but he could not get it. Finally the bird leaped into the air and landed on the strawberry. Something was wrong though the strawberry, it was hard and not soft. The bird got off of the strawberry to look at it more closely. No sooner had he moved off of the strawberry did a giant worm jump up out of the strawberry onto the bird. The bird was terrified and screamed so loud he scared some of the animals of the jungle. He jumped ten feet high in the air and ran as fast as he

could.

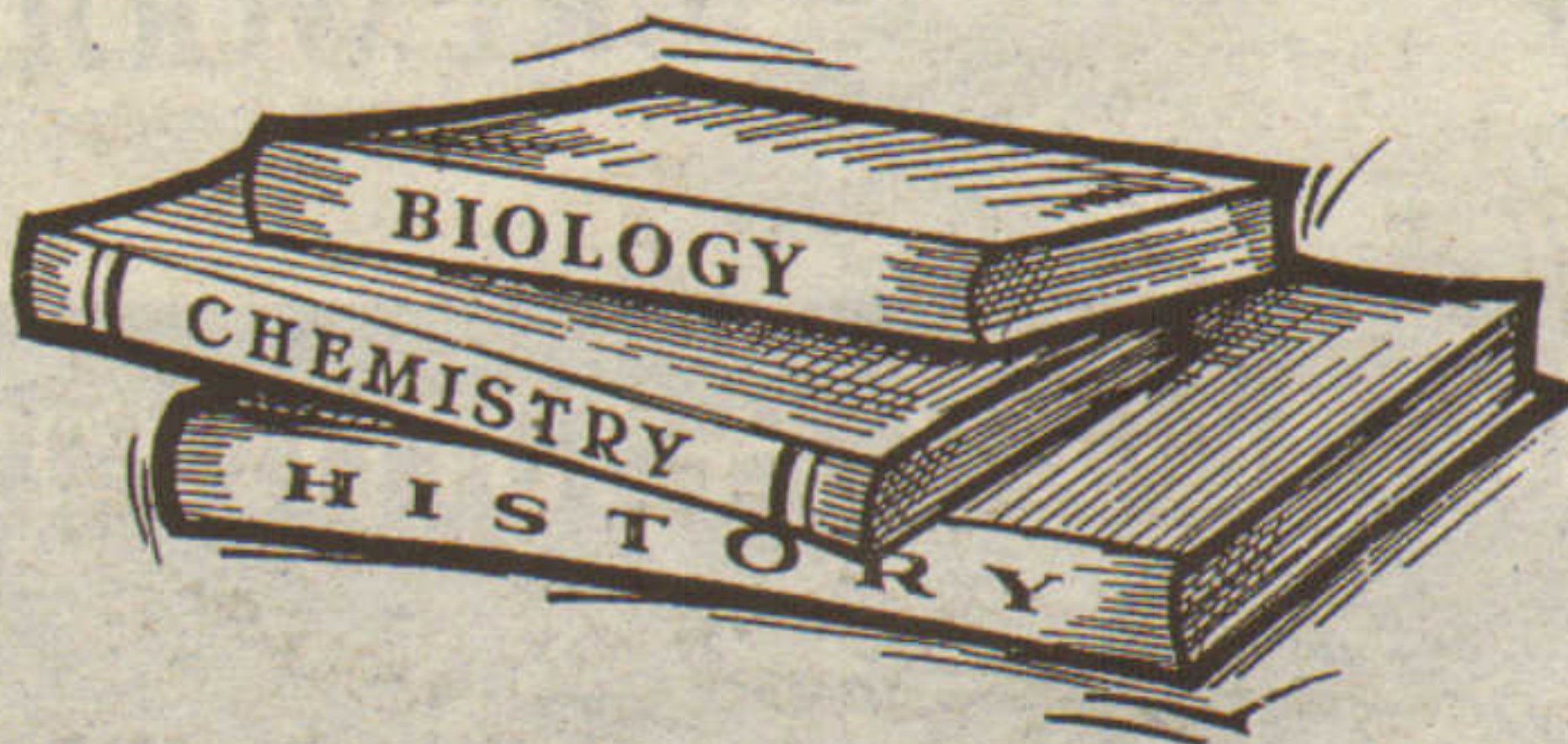
The snake was laughing so hard he was crying. What had happened was that he would pull the string he tied to the strawberry every time the bird came near it. He had also made the giant plastic worm inside the strawberry to scare the bird. His trick had worked and he felt very happy.

The bird on the other hand was not so happy. The other animals of the forest were not very happy either. They were tired of the snake always playing jokes on them and this time he had gone too far. The poor bird was so scared that he had not left his house for days. Something had to be done about the snake and his mean tricks. With the bird's permission, the animals of the jungle went to talk to the

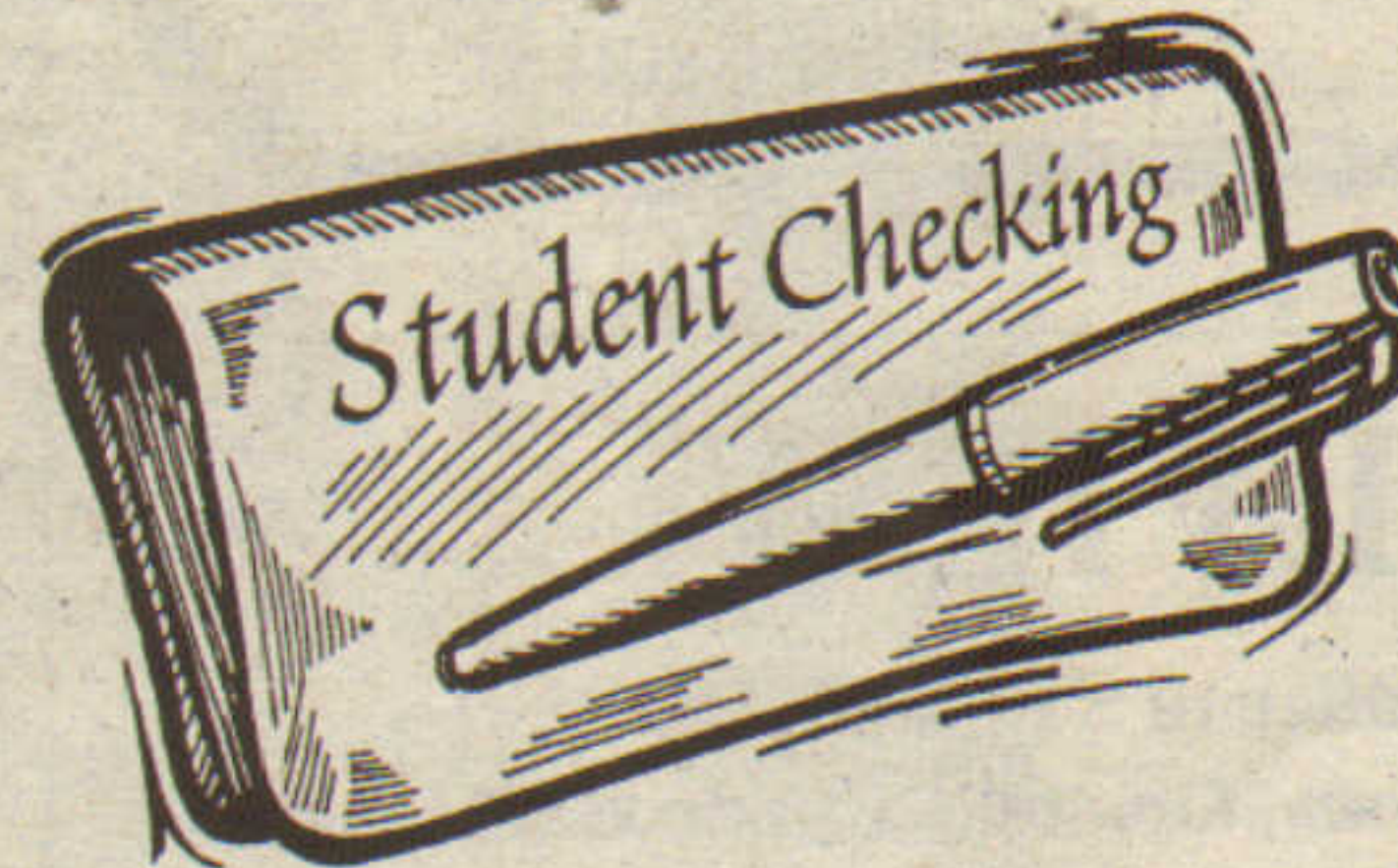
spirits of the jungle that watched over them and protected them.

The spirits decided that because the bird had been scared so much and had been tricked so many times that he deserved a special gift. They made his wings longer and gave him a lot of beautiful feathers to go along with them. Now the bird could fly and soar in the air. As for the snake he should have something taken from him because he had been so mean to all of the other animals. So the spirits took away the snakes legs. He could no longer walk or run about like all of the other animals, he had to slither and move about on the ground of the jungle, making it harder for him to play tricks on the other animals.

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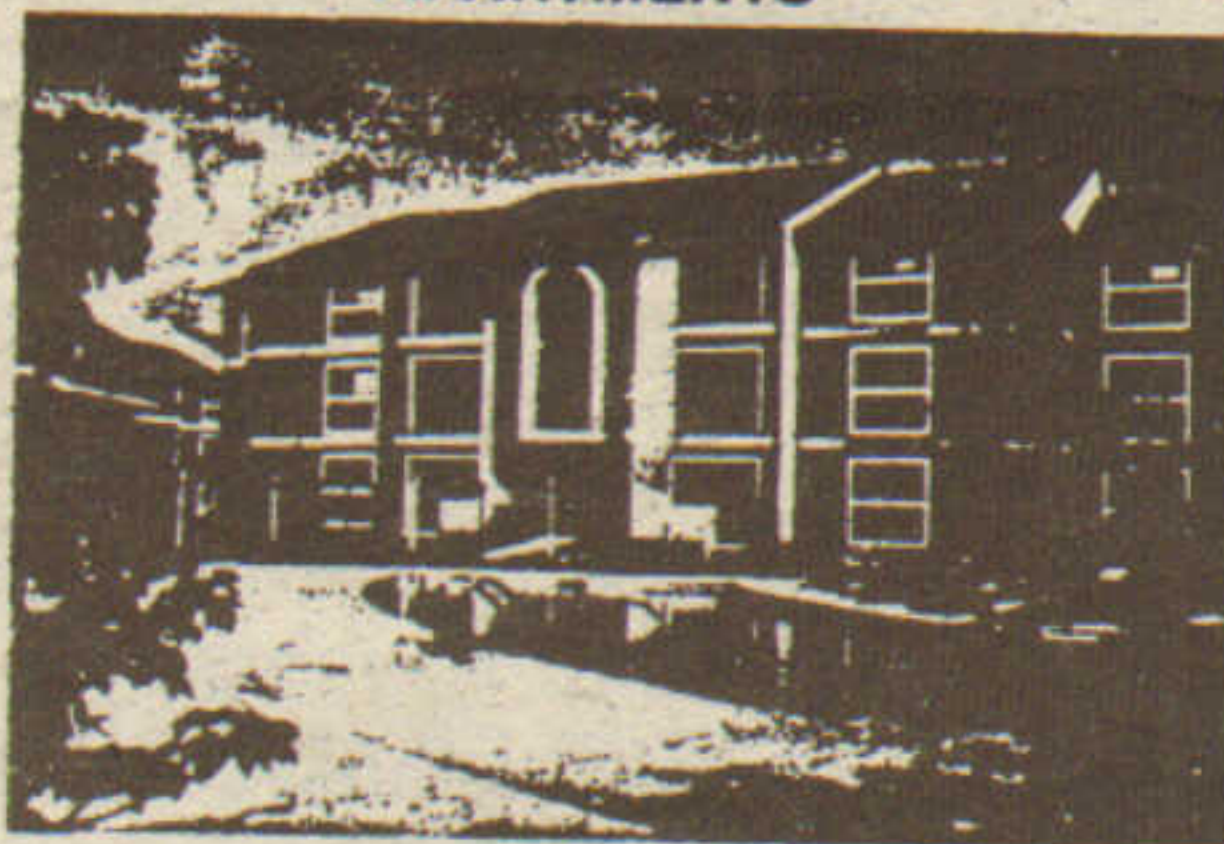
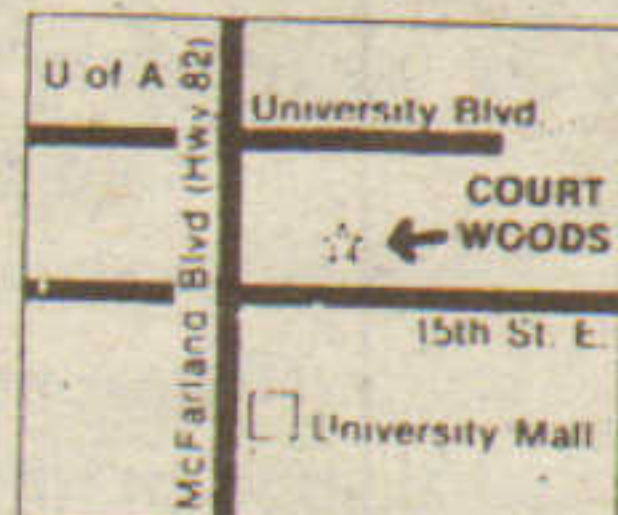


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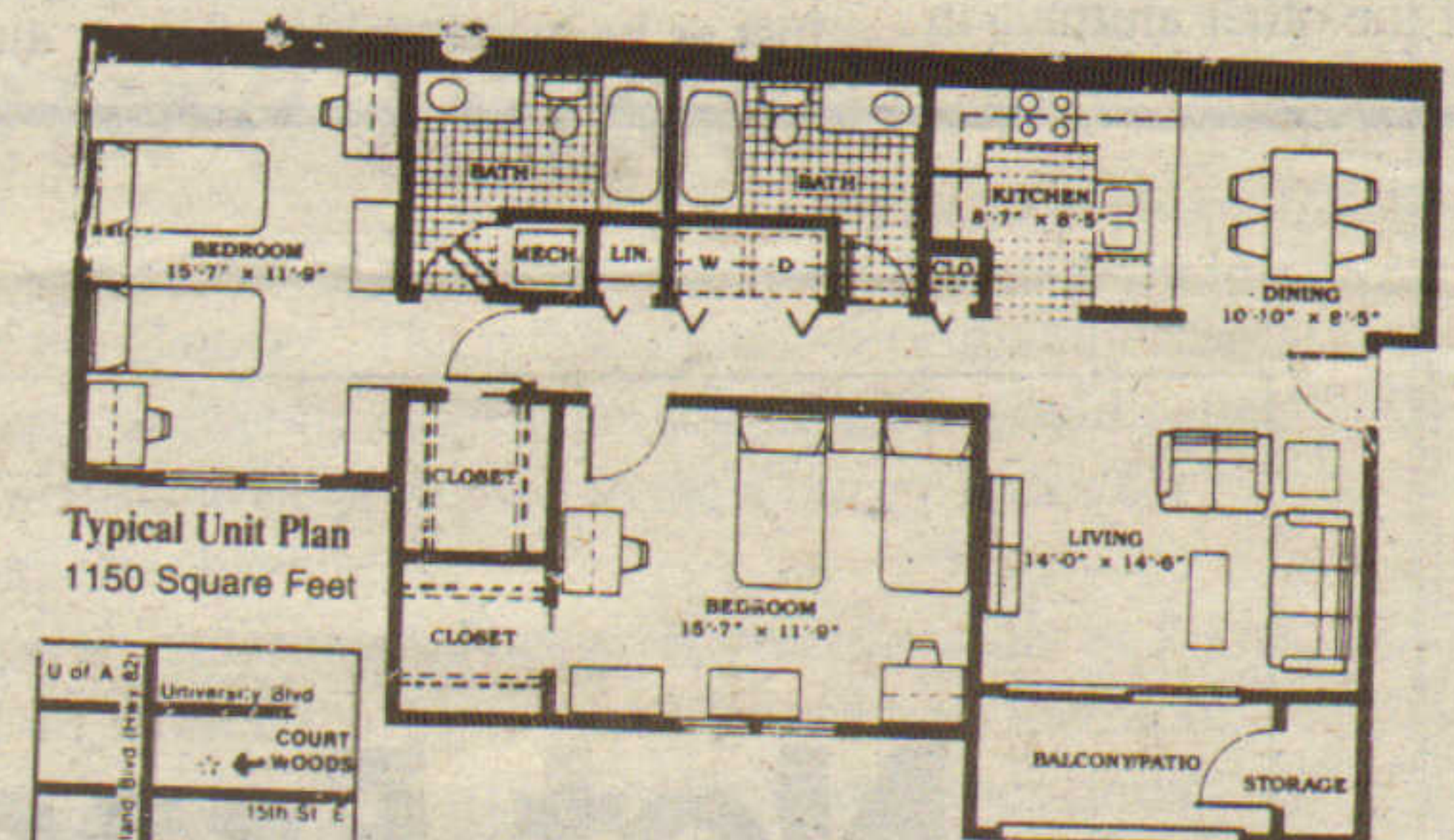
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